

A BELL BOY'S RISE

E. M. Statler, Owner of Big Hotels, Began Work at Nine Years
—Got His Education Watching the Guests He
Served—His First Venture

FROM working in the "glory hole" of a glass factory to being proprietor of a chain of hotels known the world over is going a long way. That is the story of E. M. Statler. He insists on plain initials. Five cities, Buffalo, Cleveland, Detroit, St. Louis and New York, already know what Statler service means. Today he is planning the conquest of a sixth. Boston is soon to have a hotel built on the principles of "a bath with every room" and "a guest is never wrong."

Not satisfied with invasions into new cities, Mr. Statler is returning to the improvement of ventures in old. Buffalo is the city where the first permanent Statler hotel went up. That was in 1908. Conditions have changed since then. The four-hundred-and-fifty-room hotel no longer is adequate to meet the possible business there. A new Statler, with 1,071 rooms and baths, is going up there now and is expected to be ready next April. It was to insure the success of this new Statler that he purchased the Hotel Iroquois of that city. The Iroquois is to Buffalo what the Waldorf is to New York, a conservative hotel of tradition and standing. The Iroquois, however, will not continue operating as a hotel for long. It will be sold or converted into an office building. At any rate it will be eliminated as a possible source of hotel competition.

It is a unique tale, this one, about a man of simple ways whose first lesson in English came from a bartender. It started about fifty years ago. At that time reformers were interested in problems other than those of straggly-haired spindle-legged little boys. They were particularly interested in slavery. It was against the law to own slaves, but it was in good order to employ little girls and boys at a wage well-nigh next to nothing.

In Wheeling, W. Va., there was a glass factory. One operation was tending the "glory hole," a furnace similar to the kilns in pottery works. It was a place that turned "hairy apes" into rebels or destroyed their spirit. At this "glory hole" worked this nine-year-old boy, who had to help support eight or nine other members of his family. For three years he came regularly to that fiery hole. He knew nothing of play or schooling. Waking hours meant work, other hours meant sleep. There was little or no respite between the two.

It is strange what shabby tricks memory plays us. Perhaps they are not shabby at all, but generous. Today E. M. Statler has almost forgotten the burning heat, the parched throat and the sweating body of the life he led half a century ago, and remembers only with justifiable pride that he was doing mighty well for his years. When he started he got 25 cents a turn at his job, two turns a day. This meant 50 cents daily for the family budget. When he left the "glory hole," E. M. Statler, aged 12, was making the wages of 45 cents a turn, two turns, 90 cents.

He did not leave his job in the glass factory for one offering richer monetary rewards. He left it in the casual fashion of youth when he heard that the McClure House in Wheeling wanted a bell boy. McClure House was the show place of the city. It was five stories high, had stores on the lower floor and an elevator that took you to the upper floors. "You" was written advisedly. It meant guests and the manager. It never meant the bell boys or maids. Six dollars a month went with the job.

Young Statler came to the hotel rich in knowledge, of economic strife but poor in the rudiments of speech and manner as practiced outside of a "glory hole." He comprehended his lack of polish but covered it up by keeping his mouth shut and getting his lessons how and where he could. He and the bartender, Tom Duffy, became great friends and one day Statler told Duffy an incident of his career. "I seen it wasn't right," he said. Tom Duffy stopped him in the middle of his tale. "Never say 'I seen,' he corrected the boy, say 'I saw.' That's English."

Statler swallowed his lesson and never forgot it. Neither has he forgotten Tom Duffy. "I used to see him sometimes, down in Wheeling, but today I guess old Tom is either shoveling coal or playing a harp," he said the other day, when speaking of him.

Watched Guests, Learned Manners.

Tom Duffy was not the only one from whom the boy learned the essentials of speech and conduct. He used to watch the manners of guests and take lessons. At that time no room boasted of anything more than a washstand, a pitcher and basin, a cheap dresser and bed, but the boy thought it all very elegant. It

an inkling of the profits made by hotel keepers. The brother of the owner was bookkeeper. He taught the young clerk the rudiments of the ruled-page and credits and debits. As Mr. Statler puts it, this was caused more by a desire to shove some of the work on to his shoulders than to help him, but the knowledge he gained was not confined to bookkeeping. McClure ran a billiard room and the eyes of the young clerk grew large when he saw the profits it was bringing in.

There was little advancement after his job as day clerk so he decided to leave. About this time plans were being made to rebuild and reorganize McClure

He decided that he would make up for those lost hours, and began making annual trips to Canada for fishing. On the way to Canada he often stopped at Buffalo. There was a big office building there that interested him. It was called the Ellicott Square Building. On each floor, in the halls, there was running ice water. Not even McClure House, with all of its provincial grandeur, could boast of that. He thought of the number of trips his feet might have been saved if there had been running ice water on the floors of that hotel.

In Buffalo he ate at a restaurant near the office building and paid what seemed to him a fancy price. When he returned home the memory of the building and the restaurant near by stayed with him. His mother was a good cook. So were his sisters. He began asking questions of them, figuring what it cost to put up a meal of veal chops, potatoes, coffee and pie. He compared their prices with those he had paid in the restaurant. Then the thought came, "there must be money in a restaurant."

Restaurant Next Venture.

He slept on the idea and thought on it. The next time he went to Canada to fish he stopped in Buffalo to put through a little business deal. For a rental of \$8,400 a year he got a concession to build a restaurant on the ground floor of the Ellicott Square Building.

If failure can start success it was that deal which started Mr. Statler in the way he has since gone. Inside of three months he had installed \$26,000 worth of equipment, all on credit. Bills began coming in which he could not meet. A grocer sent him a notice that unless he paid \$180 he would be sued. Fearful of consequences, Mr. Statler went into the first law office he came to in the building and explained his fix. He was advised to transfer all of his holdings and property to some member of his family. He did so at once. That saved him. The next day creditors of all sorts came to collect, but found that nothing was collectable. His lawyer then advised that he buy up his debts at 10 per cent. of their value. Mr. Statler refused. He was certain that, with an extension of time, he could pay in full. He did. The restaurant, after weathering the first storm, began prospering and became a success.

Things gradually grew better. In 1901 the Pan-American Exposition was held in Buffalo. How to take care of visitors was a question agitating the city. Mr. Statler had the answer. He would build a temporary hotel of 2,100 rooms sixteen feet from the exposition ground if granted the concession. Needless to say, he got it. When the exposition was over and the building razed, Mr. Statler found that he had just managed to break even. However, he had made his mark.

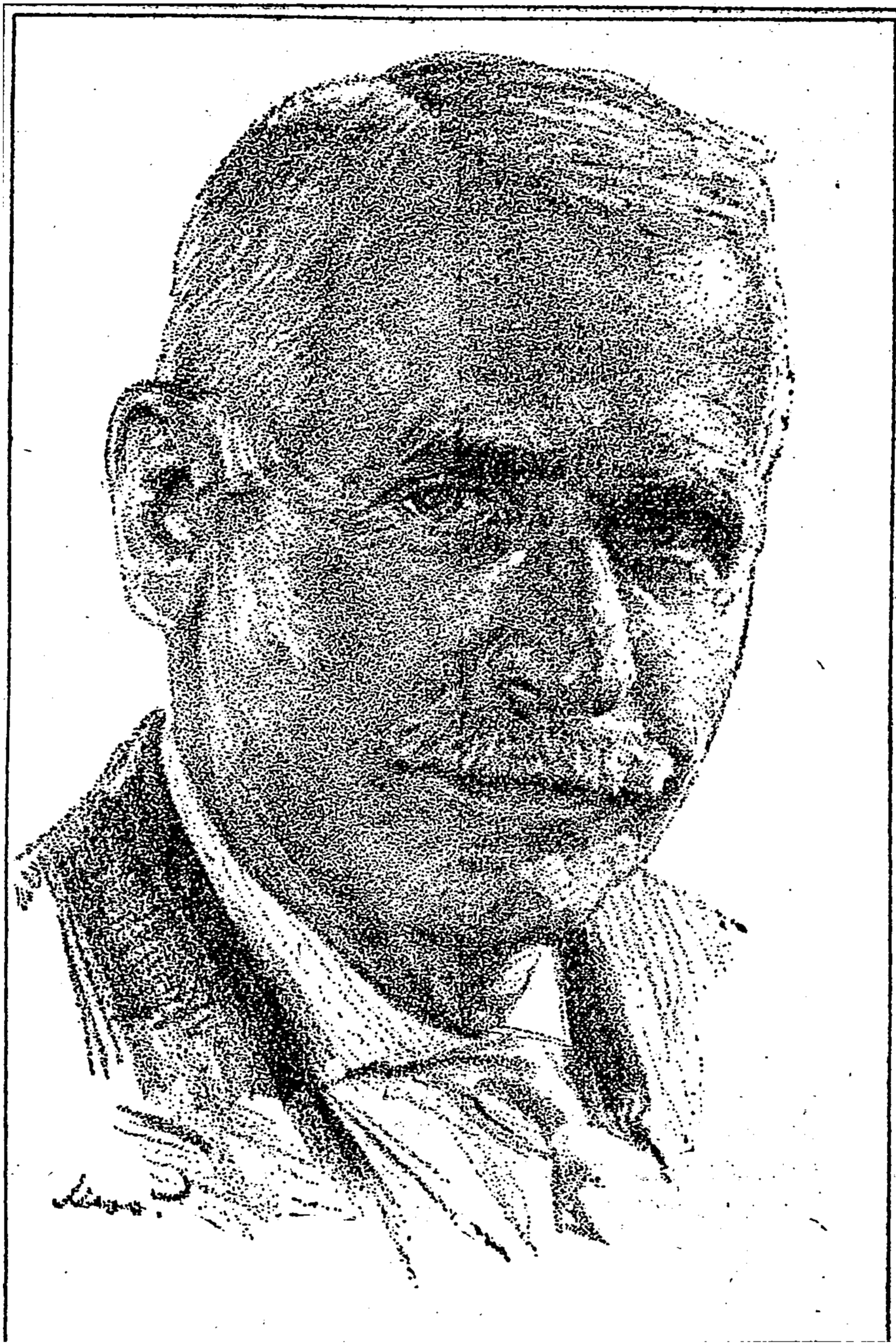
When the exposition in St. Louis was planned in 1904 it was suggested to Mr. Statler that he build a similar temporary hotel. He agreed on the condition that he get a concession within the grounds. His condition was accepted and on the day the fair opened the Inside Inn with 2,257 rooms and full restaurant equipment was ready to take care of the crowds.

Delay on the job had cost him \$200,000. He borrowed that amount with the understanding with his creditors that not one cent of profit was to go into his pocket until all was paid. In the end he made \$280,000.

An accident in the kitchen of the Inside Inn disabled him for a year. He, with two other men, went to examine a suspicious lot of steam from a coffee urn. The bottom of the urn dropped out and twenty gallons of steaming, boiling coffee cascaded over Mr. Statler. At first it seemed that he would not survive, but he finally recovered. Before going to St. Louis he had acquired a site for a hotel in Buffalo. While he was ill he planned the building of this house.

First of all he remembered the iced water in the halls of the Ellicott Square

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E. M. Statler.

was different from the surroundings to which he had been accustomed. He liked the difference.

General Nathan Goff once stayed at the hotel, an imposing figure. He rang for a boy and Statler was sent up to his room. He made it in double quick time.

"Bring me a cuspidor, boy," said the General. "Yes, sir," answered Statler, and waited, half expecting to get the money with which to go out and buy it. He was certain that his friend, Tom Duffy, could tell him where this new-fangled thing was to be had. The General looked at him closely, then grinned.

"I reckon you didn't get me, son," he said. "I want a spittoon." He got it and Statler added a new word to his vocabulary.

From a bellboy his rise was steady until he became night clerk and then day clerk at \$50 a month. All of this time he saved what he could, but as yet there was no ambition in his heart to one day come riding home as the most prominent citizen of Wheeling. However, while he was night clerk, he got

House. Statler had a little money. He suggested to the new managers that they lease him the billiard room and railroad ticket concession. The offer was accepted. The profits he had figured for McClure House now began piling up under his own name.

Wheeling then decided to show the world that it was not behind the times by building a Musée. A bowling alley was installed but was a dead loss from the start. Statler had his eye on it and when things looked hopeless for the men who ran it he offered to buy them out. They agreed. Bowling, he believed, was not the thing Wheeling wanted. He divided his space into three parts. In one section he installed billiard tables, of the second he made a lunchroom and the third he leased to a barber. Then his profits grew still faster.

About fifteen years after he had quit the "glory hole," he was making between \$4,000 and \$5,000 a year. That was a considerable income then. He became a man of the world. The thing that he had missed most as a child was play.

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office building. He made up his mind that he would go that one better. He would have running iced water in every room. Second, he decided that never should a request for a room and bath in his hotel be answered with the reply that the last one "had just been let." Every room was to have a private bath, a tub for the more expensive, a shower for the less. There were other things, but most important of all was service. The way to succeed, he felt, was always to do a little better than the best of his competitors.

The hotel was built and the physical features came up to requirements. How to drive home the idea of service to his men was a big problem. It was answered in an unusual way. A guest wrote to Mr. Statler, complaining of the treatment he had received at the hands of a night clerk. He was a well-known citizen of a neighboring city.

After arriving in Buffalo he found that he had forgotten his money. He explained the matter to the satisfaction of the day clerk, but the night clerk insisted on taking the man's watch before he would let him leave the hotel. The letter the man wrote to Mr. Statler

mine. He is your immediate benefactor.

Snap judgments of men oftentimes are faulty. A man may wear a red necktie, a green vest and tan shoes, and still be a gentleman.

The Unpretentious Man with the soft voice may possess the wealth of Croesus. The stranger in cowhide boots, broad-brim and rusty black hat may be President or a railroad or a Senator from over the Ridge.

You cannot afford to be superior or sullen with any patron of this hotel. I said so.

Have every one feel that for his money we want to give him more sincere service than he ever before received at any hotel.

The employe who helps to perpetuate this plan is never out of a job, nor does he escape the eye of the man behind the scenes—the Boss.

At rare intervals some perverse member of our force disagrees with a guest as to the rightness of this or that.

He maintains that the meat is well done—when the guest says it isn't.

Or that this sauce was ordered when the guest says the other.

Or that the boy did go up to the room.

Or that no party called.

Or that it was a room reserved and not dinner for six.

Or that the trunk wasn't there.

Either may be right.

Service for a Million a Day.

Hotel.	When Opened.	No. Rooms and Baths.	No. Em- ployes.	Guests Daily (Average.)	Annually.
Buffalo	Jan., 1908	450	400	648	236,520
Cleveland	Oct., 1912	1,000	700	1,185	432,525
Detroit	Feb., 1915	1,000	750	1,250	456,250
St. Louis	Nov., 1917	650	650	808	294,920
New York	Jan., 1919	2,200	2,200	2,879	1,050,835
(Pennsylvania)					
Total		5,300	4,700	6,770	2,471,050

was to the point. It emphasized the need of service and co-operation in a hotel. The writer had received neither, he insisted. The new hotel had failed in the object the owner had been most anxious to achieve. His guest had made a straight-from-the-shoulder complaint. Equally straight-forward. Mr. Statler wrote the man, telling him of his hopes about service and co-operation and disarmed the guest by asking his help. As a result of that incident, an employes' service code was written by the man who had lodged the complaint. Here it is:

The Statler Code.

Our hotels are operated primarily for the benefit and convenience of their guests. Without guests there could be no hotels.

These are simple facts easily understood.

So then it behooves every man and woman employed here to remember this always, and to treat all guests with courtesy and careful consideration.

Any member of our force who lacks the intelligence to interpret the feeling of good-will that this hotel holds toward its guests cannot stay here very long.

New customers are just as valuable to us as old customers—remember that; for each new customer is an old customer in the making.

See that you do your part to make him want to come back here, with his family and his friends.

Impress upon him the fine goodfellowship of the place; the "no-trouble-to-help-you" spirit.

Never be perky, pungent, or fresh—the guest pays your salary as well as

But these are permanent instructions: No employe of this hotel is allowed the privilege of arguing any point with a guest. He must adjust the matter at once to the guest's satisfaction, or call his superior to adjust it. Wrangling has no place in this hotel.

Today this code is part of the equipment of every employe in each of the Statler hotels. It is printed and reprinted in thousands of copies. In a large measure it has been the inspiration for nationally conducted advertising campaigns. The advertisements are addressed to the employes of the organization. They are talks by Mr. Statler telling them what their duties are. "If people find it difficult or unpleasant to do business at the room desk," he tells the room clerk, "that's a sure sign of a poor room clerk." To the head waiter he says: "Remember that anything which is not right—and the guest is always the judge—must be made right as soon as your attention is called to it." He has other messages for the maids, porters, bellboys, managers, kitchen staff.

After Buffalo came Cleveland with 1,000 rooms and baths, Detroit with the same number, St. Louis with 650, and then the Pennsylvania. That is the largest, with 2,200 rooms and baths. A new Statler is nearing completion in the city of his original hotel venture, Buffalo. Now comes the news of one in Boston. What's the answer to all this? Mr. Statler was asked.

"Ideals in organization," he said, "or organization in ideals. Have it your own way."

Renewal of Armistice.

Reduction of German Forces.

1. M. CLEMENCEAU, in opening the Meeting, suggested that the discussion should be continued from the point at which it left off in the morning.

PRESIDENT WILSON said that after reflecting on the morning's proceedings he had come to the conclusion that the difference of opinion was reduced to one point. That point was one of great importance. Mr. Balfour had made the difficulty quite clear by saying that we should not delay until our forces were so reduced that we could not compel the Germans to accede to our demands. This was the point that he had himself sought to make clear. By reducing our forces month by month, and by renewing the armistice month by month, we might be led to a stage at which Germany could resist with some prospect of success. He wished to be sure the danger point was past before reducing the Allied forces to the extent mentioned in the morning. Should trouble arise he would be quite willing to re-mobilise the American forces, but this might be difficult, and it would certainly be a lengthy process, as the troops would have scattered to their homes. The longer we dealt with the Germans on this plan, the longer their hopes would have to grow. This might lead them to a false sense of self-confidence, and the German Government's forces might consolidate in a way which it was not at present possible to forecast, and the ancient pride and boastfulness of Germany might gain a new lease of life. The point under discussion in the morning concerning which no agreement had been reached was the question whether the military terms of peace could be isolated from the other conditions of peace. Peace, it had been said, was one fabric with one pattern. The plea of general disarmament, which had been alluded to, seemed to render it difficult as a provisional measure to prejudge what should be the relative strengths of national forces. Disarmament contained two elements - (1) the maintenance of an adequate force for internal police; (2) the national contribution to the general force

force of the future League of Nations. At present we did not contemplate that Germany should make any contribution to the latter force. We need therefore not take that element into consideration. All we need contemplate was the amount of armed force required by Germany to maintain internal order and to keep down Bolshevism. This limit could be fixed by the military advisers. In general, he felt that until we knew what the German Government was going to do, and how the German people were going to behave, the world had a moral right to disarm Germany, and to subject her to a generation of thoughtfulness. He therefore thought it was possible to frame the terms of Germany's disarmament before settling the terms of peace. He was encouraged in this belief by the assurance that the military advisers could produce a plan in 48 hours. It might take more than 48 hours for the heads of Governments to agree on this plan. It was not his idea that the armistice should be protracted very much longer, but a definite term could not be fixed until the Governments had matured their judgment concerning the disarmament of Germany. Once this point was settled, the Germans could be given short notice to accede to our demands under pain of having the armistice broken. The main thing was to do this while our forces were so great that our will could not be resisted. The plan he proposed would make safety antecedent to the peace. He thought that this brought the two views into accord as regards the purpose in the minds of both parties to the morning's debate.

Before concluding, he wished to draw M. Clemenceau's attention to a statement made by the papers that the French Government had stopped demobilisation.

M. CLEMENCEAU said that this was not true.

PRESIDENT WILSON said that the rumour was general throughout France, and some of his friends on their way to the front had found people much alarmed at the prospect of a renewal of the war. This feeling rendered people uneasy about re-starting their ordinary lives, and these rumours were very much to our disadvantage.

disadvantage. He thought it important to put a stop to mischief of this kind. He was himself convinced that the rumours were unfounded but after all the world was full of accomplished liars, and he wished to spoil their game.

He regretted that he had not put his views in the morning in so complete a manner.

M. CLEMENCEAU said that the purpose pursued by President Wilson was exactly the same as his own. He was therefore prepared to accept his proposal. Before doing so, however, he would like more precise information on certain points. He was to ask the experts to state as quickly as possible the conditions of the disarmament of Germany. The American experts, President Wilson had said, were ready. The French were also ready.

MR BALFOUR remarked that the English were ready, too.

M. CLEMENCEAU said that in those conditions their report could be obtained very soon. But the thought struck him that President Wilson was going away in a few days, and the date of his return was uncertain. Though the report of the experts might be received in a short time, he would not like to discuss a matter of such importance in the absence of President Wilson. Doubtless President Wilson would be away for a month. The delay therefore would be of considerable extent. There would be a further month of demobilisation, and a critical distribution of our forces. He was not discussing the question in principle, but only seeking a way out of the difficulty. At present the armistice was being renewed month by month, but the Allies had a right to break it at any moment after 48 hours' notice. There was not therefore a very great difference between the two systems, save that the one at present enforced was established for a slightly longer period. If the President had been staying, he would have raised no objection to the indeterminate prolongation of the armistice, but, as he was going, the difficulty arose, as he was quite unwilling to discuss the matter while President Wilson was away. He would therefore suggest that things should be left as they were, and that the armistice should

should be renewed as heretofore. This would not prevent us from giving a stern warning to the Germans at the next renewal that severer conditions would be made at the end of the month. This modification of President Wilson's proposal did not mean any disagreement. It was quite clear that the five Governments were united. In dealing with the Germans, we must be careful not only of the substance, but also of the form. The slightest appearance of hesitation would be immediately interpreted by them as a sign of weakness and an encouragement to make use of it. President Wilson's plan he again wished to repeat satisfied him completely. He only wished to get more precision as to the date.

PRESIDENT WILSON said that M. Clemenceau had paid him an undeserved compliment. In technical matters most of the brains used were borrowed: the possessors of those brains were in Paris. He would, therefore, go away with an easy mind if he thought that his plan had been adopted in principle. He had complete confidence in the views of his military advisers. If the military experts were to certify a certain figure as furnishing a marginal safety, he would not differ from them. The only other question was to decide whether this was the right time to act. On this point, he was prepared to say yes. In another month's time, the attitude of Germany might be more uncompromising. If his plan were agreed on in principle, he would be prepared to go away and leave it to his colleagues to decide whether the programme drafted by the technical advisers was the right one. He did not wish his absence to stop so important, essential and urgent work as the preparation of a preliminary peace. He hoped to return by the 13th or 15th March, allowing himself only a week in America. But he did not wish that, during his unavoidable absence, such questions as the territorial question and questions of compensation should be held up. He had asked

Colonel

When Wilson Expressed Confidence in His Military Advisers, in the Course of the Long Discussion on the Question of Renewing the Armistice Terms. (Secret Minutes of the Council of Ten, February 12, 1919.)